

Code of Behaviour

Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, child and school.

In St. Patrick's National School, we hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

Aims of the code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of policies, the school website and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage '*Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet*'.

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

General School Rules

1. Safety:

For my own safety and that of others I should:

- a) Be careful coming to and going from school.
- b) Always walk while in the school building.
- c) Remain seated at all times in class and while eating lunch.
- d) Always show respect for my fellow pupils.
- e) Bring a note of explanation following absences.
- f) Never leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal.

2. Caring for myself:

- a) Respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- b) Always be in the school at 9.15 a.m.
- c) Show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day.
- d) Always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- e) Always bring a sensible, nutritious lunch to school. One small treat permitted on Friday at parents' discretion.
- f) Always do **my best** in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.

3. Caring for others:

- a) Be kind and respectful to teachers, staff members and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by lining up properly in my class line.
- b) Behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn.
- c) Always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks home.
- d) Show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.
- e) Be truthful and honest at all times.

Never bully others. Never allow others to bully me and if it happens tell my parents and my teacher. Bullying is always unacceptable. (See Appendix 3)

Each teacher will take responsibility for drawing up a class contract at the start of the school year following discussion with the class which will sum up the above rules. From time to time, particular focus may be given to specific rules. Rules apply during school-time and during all school related activities. All children in classes from 1st to 6th will be required to sign a bullying pledge annually. **(See Appendix 3)**

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children, based closely on the General School Rules. Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible they emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not, 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher. Special Education Teacher and or principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Incentives/Reward System

Part of the vision of St. Patrick's National School is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. A variety of reward systems are used which seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- A special mention at assembly.

Field trips, annual school tours and our end of year special event will be reserved for those who have consistently strived to behave well.

A variety of reward systems operate in the school and are tailored to the needs of each particular class and in certain cases, tailored to an individual pupil as the need arises. Each class teacher will keep a record of behaviour in the designated class behaviour note book.

- Reward systems will take note of children's behaviour both good and bad.
- This reward system will enable teachers to continually monitor, encourage and reward good behaviour throughout the school year
- If a school rule is broken, a teacher will record this in the designated behaviour note book
- A child will usually receive one warning before it is recorded on file
- If a trend occurs, the teacher will meet with the child's parents/guardian
- If there is no improvement following parent/teacher meeting and if the trend continues, the class teacher and Principal will meet with parent/guardian to discuss the concerns and a behaviour plan may be put in place if deemed appropriate.
- If there is no improvement at this stage the parent/guardian will be called to meet with the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management where the situation will be discussed in detail. Guidelines will be drawn up for future behaviour in the school and playground. Very occasionally, this may include a request from the teacher/principal that the parent/guardian of the child supervise their child in school or during a school outing.
- The school reserves the right to arrange a meeting with the parents/guardians of a child at any time, should the child's behaviour be deemed to be unacceptable.
- If a parent refuses to meet with a class teacher the matter will be referred to the Principal. Any refusal to meet with the Principal and/or Chairperson will automatically be referred to the Board of Management and regarded as a serious breach of co-operation in our school behaviour policy.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

- Bringing electronic equipment or mobile-phones to school
- Not wearing appropriate uniform; bringing in chewing-gum
- Not following instructions.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious Theft
- Serious Damage to property
- Serious bullying
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes

Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

- PHYSICAL: includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.
- VERBAL: name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.
- EMOTIONAL: threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g. appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions. "Cyber/text" bullying.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Issues in relation to Bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and using Circle Time, Drama etc.

Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher.

This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as breaches of discipline – already outlined in our Code of Behaviour.

In the case where a parent reports a bullying incident, the school reserves the right to inform the relevant parties of the identity of the person making the complaint, when this is deemed necessary.

Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life (in the past or present), which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/teacher
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal, please check bags for notes)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board
- Newsletters/school web-site/e-mails
- TextaParent service.

Sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened (Consequence Sheet)
5. Loss of privileges e.g. school outing/future fun activity/tour
6. Communication with parents

7. Referral to Principal if not previously involved.
8. Principal communicating with parents
9. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. If deemed necessary, parents will be contact. See communication with parents below.

Record Keeping

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvement in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Suspension will be used after the principal is satisfied that:

- All other disciplinary options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
- The appropriate support has been given to the student
- Discussion has taken place with parents/guardians in relation to the student's behaviour
- A formal written warning has been notified to the student and his/her parents except in case of serious breach of the Code of Behaviour which may warrant immediate suspension
- All actions taken have been documented
- Copies of all correspondence are available

Procedure for Suspension

- The principal (or deputy principal in his/her absence) makes a decision to suspend a student based on the written records maintained of all the action taken in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour
- The student is informed of this decision and the grounds for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond
- Parents are notified in advance of the reasons for, dates and duration of the suspension and where possible, invited to discuss the matter further with the principal in accordance with the relevant legislation
- If the suspension is immediate, Parents/Guardians may be informed by phone with a written follow up.
- Students will not be sent home during a school day unless collected by a parent/guardian or some other arrangement is made

The formal letter to suspend (Notice of Suspension) will include:

- Effective date and duration of suspension
- Reasons for suspension
- Expectations of students while on suspension
- Importance of parent/guardian assistance in the matter
- Notice that student is under the care of parents/guardians during the suspension
- Notice that the principal informs the Board of Management of any such suspension
- Notice of the right to appeal the decision of the Principal to the Board of Management
- Notice that the suspension will be notified to the local Education Welfare Officer (It it exceeds 6 days or more or for a cumulative total of 20 days)
- Notice of the right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act.

Longer Term Suspension

Before a longer term suspension is applied:

- It must be sanctioned by the Board of Management
- Parents will have had notification that the matter will be discussed at a Board Meeting and offered the right to reply
- A meeting will have taken place with the Parents/Guardians, the principal and the deputy principal and where necessary, other pastoral support personnel in the school to help resolve the situation.
- Parents will be informed of their right to appeal any decision on suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act
- During the period of a long-term suspension, the school may insist that the student remain at home while an appeal of a suspension is in process
- Where an appeal is successful, any period of suspension served in relation to the appeal will be removed from the student file.

Procedure for the re-introduction following suspension

- Parents are requested to accompany the student on their return to school following suspension
- On their return, parents and students may be requested to sign a contract renewing their commitment to the Code of Behaviour
- Parents may at any time, be advised or requested to agree to certain procedures to assist in the student's rehabilitation e.g. refer the student for psychological assessment, counselling or other pastoral support services.

Grounds for removal of suspension

- The principal and or Board of Management may agree that a sanction other than suspension be applied
- Following a discussion with parents/guardians
- Following a successful appeal to the BOM
- Following a successful appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act
- Where new circumstances come to light

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. In advance of any hearing which could result in expulsion, the school will investigate the matter in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Possible grounds for expulsion

- Where breaches of the Code of Behaviour continue following repeated suspensions, the Principal may recommend exclusion to the Board of Management and inform the parents of this recommendation
- Where the behaviour of a student is seriously disrupting learning and having a negative effect on other students.
- Where there is serious disrespect, harassment or abuse of others
- Gross insubordination
- Where the student has no respect for or is not amenable to any form of school authority
- Where there are certain breaches of policy in relation to substance abuse
- Exclusion may be recommended where there is:
 - Serious concern for the safety of others
 - Contracts of behaviour following repeated suspensions are not being kept

- Serious assault
- Serious theft
- Causing major damage to the school property
- Possession of or brandishing an offensive weapon

These examples are not exclusive

Principal's role re' expulsion

The principal will always refer to the Board of Management in matters of expulsion. However, the principal may suspend a student immediately in some circumstances e.g. violence, threat of violence, gross subordination, illegal drugs, pending a referral to the BOM with a recommendation of expulsion. An offence of gross misconduct by a student may warrant immediate expulsion.

Exclusion by the Board of Management will be considered after the Principal is satisfied that:

- All other disciplinary options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
- Appropriate support has been given to the student e.g. Diagnostic assessment where appropriate, counselling
- Discussion has taken place with parents/guardians in relation to the student's behaviour in relation to specific incidents which may have led to suspension and now lead to expulsion
- Formal written warnings have been notified to the student and his/her parents/guardians in relation to serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour
- Formal written expectations of behaviour have been notified to both student and parents e.g. contracts showing commitment to the school Code of Behaviour.
- Parents have been made aware of any reports of suspension to the BOM.
- Parents have been made aware of formal reports to the BOM in relation to the behaviour of the student and invited to respond to or attend a Board of Management meeting.
- Parents are informed of the Board of Management meeting where there is an intention to recommend suspension or expulsion and they have been invited to attend such meeting
- All actions have been documented
- Copies of all correspondence are available

Role of Board of Management

Expulsion can only occur after the Board of Management has adhered to the following procedure.

- Heard the principal's case against the student (in the presence of the parents where possible)
- Heard the parent's response
- Examined all the documentation which has been given to the parents
- Considered the students record in the school
- Taken legal/expert advice where necessary

- Ensured that the Principal is not present for the Boards discussion and decision on the matter
- Discussed the case in detail
- Considered all matters having regard to the Boards responsibilities to the whole school community, the ethos of the school and the principles of natural justice
- Made a final decision to expel
- Communicated the decision formally to the parents through the secretary of the Board of Management
- Informed the Education Welfare Officer
- Informed parents of their right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act.

The Formal Letter

The formal letter of notification will include:

- Notice of intent to expel
- Reasons for expulsion
- Effective date of expulsion including a statement that the student will stand suspended for 20 school days after receipt of notification by the Education Welfare Officer when the final decision to expel will be made by the Board and become effective.
- A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been notified
- Information and documentation on appeal rights under section 29 of the Education Act

Appeals

There is a right to appeal an expulsion under the Education Welfare Act. An appeal may be made to the Secretary General under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Procedural Fairness

Procedural fairness is a basic right of all individuals dealing with authorities. All communities have a legitimate expectation that schools (Boards, principals, deputy principals and teaching staff) will follow these principles in all circumstances, particularly when dealing with suspension and expulsion.

Procedural fairness is generally recognised as having two elements;

1. The right to be heard which includes:
 - a. The right to know why the actions is happening
 - b. The right to know the way in which the issues will be determined
 - c. The right to know the allegations in the matter and any other information which will be taken into account
 - d. The right of the person against whom the allegations have been made to respond to the allegation
 - e. The right of an appeal

2. The right of the person to an impartial decision which includes:
 - a. The right to impartiality in the investigation and decision making phases
 - b. The right to an absence of bias in the decision-maker

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of BOM)



St. Patrick's National School

Rules of the School

Covid-19 and Other Infectious Diseases: I will follow the measures in place in school for my own health, hygiene and safety and the health, hygiene and safety of others.

Safety: For my own safety and that of others I should:

- g) Be careful coming to and going from school.
- h) Always walk while in the school building.
- i) Remain seated at all times in class and while eating lunch.
- j) Always show respect for my fellow pupils.
- k) Bring a note of explanation following absences.
- l) Never leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal.

Caring for myself:

- g) Respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- h) Always be in the school at 9.15 a.m.
- i) Show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day.
- j) Always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- k) Always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Crisps, fizzy drinks, chocolate bars, Sweets and chewing gum are not permitted.
- l) Always do **my best** in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.

Caring for others:

- f) Be kind and respectful to teachers, staff members and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by lining up properly in my class line.
- g) Behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn.
- h) Always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks home.
- i) Show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.
- j) Be truthful and honest at all times.
- k) Practice good hygiene etiquette at all times.

Bullying:

Never bully others. Never allow others to bully me and if it happens tell my parents and my teacher. Bullying is always unacceptable.

When attending St. Patrick's National School, I agree to follow the above school rules.

Pupil's Signature: _____ **Parent/Guardian Signature:** _____

Parent /Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 2

St. Patrick's National School



Sports Code of Conduct

Players from opposing teams.

- ❖ Shake hands before and after the match.
- ❖ Treat our opponents with respect.
- ❖ Wish them well whether they win or lose.
- ❖ Never deliberately hit an opponent.
- ❖ Never lose my temper.

Our Own Team Coaches.

- ❖ Respect our own team coaches.
- ❖ If I'm not picked to play in a match, I shouldn't complain.
- ❖ Never use bad language.
- ❖ Never be cheeky or back answer our own team coaches.
- ❖ If our own team coach is giving a pep talk or advising us, I should not interrupt.

Supporters and Coaches of Other Teams.

- ❖ Respect adults supporting and coaching other teams.
- ❖ Not use bad language.
- ❖ Never give cheek to them.
- ❖ Wish them well if I meet them after a game.

Fellow players.

- ❖ Respect our fellow players and treat them as part of a team.
- ❖ The team includes the players and the substitutes – the full panel.
- ❖ Show loyalty to everyone on our team.
- ❖ Encourage my team mates and support them, even when they make mistakes.
- ❖ Remember my team mates are always trying their best.

Referees.

- ❖ Respect the referee as he/she is in charge of the match.
- ❖ Never give cheek or use bad language to the referee.
- ❖ Remember that I can never change a referee's decision no matter what I say or do/a referee's decision is always final.
- ❖ If the referee's decision seems unfair, I should not give out, sulk, blame other people; instead get on with the game.
- ❖ Shake hands with the referee and thank him/her after the game.

When participating in sport organised by St. Patrick's National School, I agree to follow the above Code of Conduct.

Pupil's Signature: _____

Parent 1/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent 1/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3



Anti-Bullying Pledge

I _____, pupil of St. Patrick's National School, agree to join together with my fellow pupils to stop bullying.

BY SIGNING THIS PLEDGE, I AGREE TO:

- Treat others respectfully.
- Try to include those who are left out.
- Refuse to bully others.
- Refuse to watch, laugh or join in when someone is being bullied.
- Tell an adult.
- Help those who are being bullied.

Signed: _____ Date: _____